

The Monographic Factor: Theoretical and Architectural Aspects of Single-Artist Museums
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Abstract

While the museum boom has been accompanied by ample reflection on museum architecture, the diversity between different sorts of museums has not always been taken into account. This paper evaluates the stakes in museum architecture for one specific type of museum: the single-artist museum. Critical reviews of individual new monographic museums tend to limit their evaluation of the suitability of a new artist's museum design for its programme to the questions if the museum provides an adequate representation of the artist in case and if the galleries fit his or her work. Yet, we should be wary not to personalize the architectural evaluation of single-artist museums too readily. Instead, we can conceptualize a 'monographic factor' on the level of the institutional programme in general, to map how single-artist museums differ as institutions from more general art museums, and how this imports for their architecture. It is argued that single-artist museums are hybrid institutions modelled, simultaneously but to varying degrees, after the art museum, the archive and the person's memorial. The stakes in designing single-artist museums are then to be situated in handling the possibilities and tensions that arise in the combination of these institutional modes in a particular case.